step of degassing the evaporable getter by heating the evaporable getter prior to the getter [flesh] flash step.

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 13 being independent.

The independent claims have been amended to more clearly recite Applicants' invention and further distinguish it from the cited art.

Initially, Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 13-16, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by EP '721 (Kawade). Claims 1-8, 10-20 and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Kawade in view of Kato '708. Lastly, Claims 9 and 21 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over Kawade, Kato, and Wallace '563. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, and includes the steps of activating a getter disposed in the vessel, and after activation of the getter, sealing the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel.

Claim 13 relates to a method for manufacturing an image-forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emission elements and image-forming members. The method includes the steps of activating a getter disposed in a vessel, and after activation of the getter, sealing the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, an airtight vessel that provides superior performance and a long life can be provided.

The primary citation to Kawade relates to an electron-emitting device that includes, as part of a display panel, an envelope 88 (see Figure 8). The Office Action relies on Kawade for a teaching that a getter process is performed within the envelope (citing page 20, lines 9-12).

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Kawade does not teach or suggest, among other features, sealing the vessel after activating a getter. In Kawade, the getter process is performed after an exhaust pipe is heated to hermetically seal the envelope.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

The secondary citation to Kato relates to an ultra-high vacuum field emission display and was cited for its teaching of providing a non-evaporable getter and an evaporable getter.

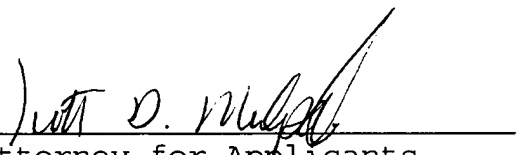
The tertiary citation to Wallace relates to a method of making a field emission device and was cited for its teaching of providing means for reactivating a non-evaporable getter.

It is submitted, however, that neither Kato nor Wallace compensate for the deficiencies in Kawade as discussed above with respect to Applicants' independent claims. Therefore, without conceding the propriety of modifying Kawade in the manner proposed in the Office Action, such modifications still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 are deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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